COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"A CERTAIN GREAT ASSEMBLY.—Fourteen Hundred Guineas per annum will be given for a Seat in the "above Assembly.—Letters addressed to C. B. Turk's Head Coffee-house, opposite Catherine-street, Strand, "will be immediately attended to."——MORNING CHRONICLE, May 21, 1807.

TO THE

RT. HON. SPENCER PERCEVAL,

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, &c.

LETTER II.

SIR,

Before I proceed to an examination of the proposition, relating to the danger, in which the church of England would have been placed by the Catholic Bill, brought into the House of Commons by the late ministers, whom we may, I think, call the *Pledging* Ministry, I must beseech you to bear with me yet a little, while I make a few further remarks applicable to the question mooted in my former letter (page 859), namely, how far the late dissolution of parliament, or any dissolution of parliament, can, in the present state of the representation, be called "a recurrence "*to the sense of the people*," and, of course, what opinion we ought to entertain of the *sincerity* of those persons, who advised the use of this phrase, in the speech, delivered to both Houses by order of the king, on the day previous to the late dissolution.

I before reminded you (page 863) of the advertisements, which we daily see in the public prints, offering to sell, or to purchase, seats in the House of Commons. As a motto to this letter, I have taken one of those advertisements; and, Sir, I again remind you, that, for the publishing of such, no man is ever punished, or in anywise called to account, though we are continually told of the great blessing which the people possess in the being able to send representatives to parliament, and, though we know, that there are several laws, made for the express *professed* purpose of preventing seats in parliament from being obtained by any other means than that of a free election, and also for the punishing of every person concerned in the procuring of such seats by the means of money.——Shall I be told, that the *House of Commons* is not *named* in these advertisements, and that there are many *other great assemblies* besides that House? Not by *you*, Sir. You, who know well the extent of the law of libel; you, who know, that *inuendoes* are quite upon a level, in such cases, with plain appellations and assertions; you, who know, that the *meaning* is to be left to the jury, enlightened by the directions of the judge, and that, if the meaning be libellous, the words are of no importance; by you, I am sure, that this miserable subterfuge will not be set up as a reason for forbearing to punish the publishers of such advertisements as the one above quoted. What, then, give me leave to ask, is *the real cause*, that such publishers are not punished, and are never reproved, but proceed with these their publications as coolly, and in as much safety, as if they were publishing advertisements relating to the sale of lands or merchandise? In other matters, apparently of trifling importance, we find the House of Commons extremely jealous of their authority and *dignity*. What, Sir, can be the reason, then, that, upon this point, they are so astonishingly lenient and careless?—— "*Fourteen hundred guineas a year* for a seat "in a certain great assembly!" Precisely what motive the tenderer might have, it would, perhaps, be difficult to discover; but, that his motive must be powerful, that a compensation was in his view, and that he expected that compensation out of the public purse, are positions, which, I am persuaded, no one will attempt to deny. Yet, Sir, by Blackstone and Paley, and still more roundly by that German sycophant, De Lolme, we are assured, that the House of Commons are the true representatives of the people, and the guardians of the public purse!——It is useless to rail against me, and others who think and speak as I do. Statements and reasoning, such as I have here made use of, are proof against all railing. They set all nick-names and all abuse at defiance. They must be *answered*, or they must produce conviction.

But, if the advertisement, which I have quoted above, and others resembling it, leave any thing wanting in the way of appellation, the same cannot be said of almost any one of the numerous party publications, which have appeared of late, relative to the return of members to parliament. The hireling prints, on both sides, seem to have thought it un-

necessary any longer to attempt disguise upon the subject. Each has accused the opposite party of rendering that constitution, which both extol to the skies, a dead letter, or, which is much worse, a mere shew, whereby to cheat the people. From the numerous articles of this description, which have been published in the daily papers, within the last month, the following one, entitled "A "HOG OR A HORSE," in the Courier newspaper of the 29th of May, seems to me to be worthy of selection; and, I think, that, a few years hence, it is likely to be regarded as a great curiosity.—"On the 13th of "April, the Morning Chronicle shewed "the small number of the constituents who "send the chief members of the present "ministry to parliament, and desired they "might be contrasted with the extensive "numbers of the constituents of the late "ministry. Transitory triumph! Lord "Howick did represent a populous county, "it is true; but now, alas! he is obliged "to sneak into the House of Commons as a "representative for one of the most con-"temptible of boroughs. The right of "voting in Appleby, is in the burgage-"holds, one half of which belong to Lord "Thanet, the other to Lord Lonsdale. *These* "*two noblemen make whom they please bur-*"*gesses for the day of election, and deprive* "*them of the privilege next day.* The two "lords, by compromise, send each one "member, and Lord Howick is of course to "be Lord Thanet's man. Hogsties being "burgage freeholds in Appleby, have been "purchased by the Thanet family at prices "exceeding all belief, and the electors of "this place *sit down quietly to be repre-*"*sented by a Hog or a Horse, as the noble* "*proprietors think most proper.* What! "Lord Howick the substitute of a hog "or a horse! Mr. Windham, lately the "proud representative of the populous "county of Norfolk, finds it necessary to "sneak in for a rotten borough, as the "substitute also of a hog or a horse. High-"am Ferrers is under the sole influence, "and at the entire disposal of Earl Fitzwil-"liam, *who might of course send a hog or* "*a horse to parliament for it*, as well as "Earl Thanet might for Appleby. Lord "Henry Petty also represented a populous "place, and had a very honourable seat as "the successor of Mr. Pitt, at Cambridge. "He too is forced to become the substitute "of a hog or a horse, as one of the mem-"bers for Launceston, where the electors "are but twenty, *and all at the nod of the* "*Duke of Northumberland, who could send* "*to parliament a hog or a horse for this bo-*"*rough*, as well as the earl of Thanet could for "Appleby. These were the only three ca-"binet ministers of the late ministry who "set for populous places in the House of "Commons. They are all turned out; and "obliged *to sneak in for rotten boroughs,* "*which the owners could compel to elect* "*hogs and horses as representatives.* "All "the talents" reduced to the situation of "hogs and horses! How degrading!—— "There is but one of the members of the "late cabinet who resumes his seat in par-"liament, and that is Thomas Grenville, "who represents Buckingham, a borough, "*in the close grasp of his brother the Mar-*"*quis*, and for which the electors are no "more than thirteen. Of course it will "not be disputed that the Marquis of Buck-"ingham *might send into the House of Com-*"*mons a hog or a horse for this borough*, as "well as Lord Thanet might for Appleby."

——Such, Sir, is the language openly made use of; such are the assertions daily published; such is the description of the House of Commons, not only *tolerated*, but given with exultation by those, who, in other columns of the very same newspapers, prove themselves to be the devoted tools of one or the other of the two parties, who are contending for the powers and emoluments of the state. Much has, at different times, been said about the representation in parliament by Sir Francis Burdett and others; but, I defy even the indefatigable John Bowles to produce me, even from the records of the Corresponding Society, any thing so degrading to the House of Commons as what I have here quoted from the writings of a man, who is devoted to the ministry of the present day, and who, while he is thus writing in one column, represents, in another, Sir Francis Burdett as aiming at the total destruction of the constitution, because he, in language less degrading to the House of Commons, expresses his abhorrence of the means by which the members of that House are returned. Why, Sir, should *his* words leave such a sting, while those of the Courier produce no sensation at all, especially seeing, that the former is held in "*contempt*?" Is it because Sir Francis *is not* "*in the regiment?*" Is it because the Courier is known to be hostile to the *man* merely, and that Sir Francis is as well known to be hostile to the *thing*? But, Sir, is this picture of the Courier *true*, or is it *false*? If false, why is not the seditious libeller punished? If true, why is Sir Francis Burdett abused? I know, Sir, that you are one of those, who have been amongst the loudest in condemning his language and his

views. You were amongst those, who subscribed against him, in his election for Middlesex; and, we were informed in the public prints, that you gave, as a lawyer, your advice for the raising of that subscription. Now, then, Sir, I beseech you to lay aside all reviling terms, as of no use, and to answer me, in words which you would wish the world to hear and to remember: *if the picture of the Courier be true, why is Sir Francis Burdett abused?* To this question I should like much to obtain an answer; and, however the people may have been worn down, and even corrupted, you may be assured, Sir, that, until a satisfactory answer is given to it, the revilings of the hired press will be of little avail. This press, which speaks the thoughts of both the factions, is undivided in its abuse of him. The factions hate, good Lord! how mortally do they hate each other; but, though they agree upon no one other point; though, as to all other matters, whether great or small, they are in direct and unvarying opposition; though, as to every thing else, the approbation of one faction is synonymous with the disapprobation of the other; on this one subject they perfectly agree in sentiment, in language, and in motive. There are, indeed, some few other men, whom they both hated; but, for him their most pure and cordial rancour is preserved. If from his pen, or his lips, such a picture as that drawn by the Courier had proceeded, what an outcry, what a yell, what an infernal howl would the all devouring wolves have raised? "Aye, but *he* is not "actuated by *fair party motives*. He is not "running the fair race. He is not for any "division or compromise. He is not at "war with the men merely, but with the "accursed thing. He is in *earnest* when he "complains of abuses, and calls for reform." This is his sin. It is this for which the factions hate him, and for which the people love him. There need no pledges from *him*. He has never given any pledges. There is a confident reliance upon him, which nothing can shake. He is distinguished above all other men in the kingdom in this respect. He is reviled by villains, blamed by some honest men; some hate him, from the same cause that thieves hate a judge, some fear him from mistake or from weakness; but, amongst all those who speak respecting him, not one, the notorious hirelings excepted, is to be found who even pretends to suspect the purity of his motives. "It is reported," says the hireling of the Morning Post, in his paper of the 30th instant; "it is *reported*, and *happy shall we* "*be to find the report confirmed*, that the "most *respectable* part of Sir Francis Burdett's *friends*, not content with a private "condemnation of his late infamous Address, now that he has so far removed the "mask, mean to proceed to some public "measure, either to induce him to disavow "the sentiments to which he has been led "to subscribe his name, or to require that "he will vacate his seat, and give them an "opportunity of electing another member, "who, whatever his political attachments "may be, is actuated by constitutional principles, and resolved to maintain that system to which we have been so long indebted for the blessings of freedom and "security. Should such an expedient be "resorted to, those who now find themselves so grossly deceived in the opinion "which their unsuspecting nature led them "to entertain of the principles of the pupil "and creature of Horne Tooke, the friend "of Arthur O'Connor, and the associate of "Colonel Despard, *may depend upon justice being done to their motives by the* "*Morning Post*. We wage war only "against the enemies of the constitution; "and those who, having discovered the "cheat, which, under the specious mask of "patriotism, has been practised upon them, "honestly acknowledge their error and renounce the mischievous impostor, will "not only receive *our warm approbation*, "*but be entitled to our full and firmest* "*support*."——I do not say, that this poor hireling might not have *hoped* to be able to inveigle some weak man into the infamy of being applauded by him; but, I assert, with full knowledge of the fact, that all those, to whom he here alludes as "the *friends* of "Sir Francis Burdett," laugh to scorn his miserable device, which in point of contemptibleness, is surpassed by nothing but the clamour of the well-dressed rabble, who read his columns, and who, for the far greater part, share with him, either directly or indirectly, in the public plunder. No, Sir, we, the people of England, feel that Sir Francis Burdett is our best friend. We participate in his principles, we rely on his talents and integrity, we approve of his declarations, we despise the circulators of the a-hundred-times refuted calumnies against him, and we look forward, with renovated hope, to the day, when those calumnies will be drowned in the unanimous applause of a no longer besotted people. Indeed, to suppose that this will not be the case, would be to libel human nature; for, is it not to set the people of England down for brutes, to suppose that they can approve of a system such as that

described by the Courier? And, again I ask; if that description be not true; if seats in the House of Commons be not bought and sold, why are not these writers and publishers punished, by that law, which, as to matters of libel, is so watchful, so jealous, and so severe?

I now come to the proposed subject of my letter. I said, that I thought myself able to prove, "that Lord Howick's bill, if "passed into a law, would not have tended "to re-exalt the Roman Catholic Church, "and thereby sap the predominance of the "Church of England;" and this I shall now endeavour to do. But, first of all, let me observe, that there is one question, very material in this discussion, which seems to have been entirely overlooked, namely, *whether the sapping of the predominance of the Church of England would be a national evil?* I, for my own part, should regret to see it sapped, and overthrown, because I am persuaded, that it might easily be restored to its former purity and utility; but, when we see in what manner its benefices are but too generally bestowed; when we look at the endless list of non-resident incumbents; when we see the fruits enjoyed by those of its ministers who perform none, or very little of the labour; when we compare the solemn promises of the incumbents with their subsequent practice; when we see more than half of the people, who frequent any place of worship at all, turning from the church to the meeting-house: when we see all this, we must not be very much surprized, if there should be found many persons, who entertain doubts, at least, upon the question above stated; and, therefore, previous to the clamour against Lord Howick's bill, as tending to sap the predominance of the church, those doubts should have been removed.——Viewing the church establishment as connected with the political state of the country, it should, in like manner, have been previously shown, that this establishment has been, and is, conducive to the greatness of the nation, the permanence of the throne, and the freedom and happiness of the people. It should have been shewn, that the several persons embodied under the church establishment, are more jealous of the national character, than a Roman Catholic clergy would have been; we should have been referred to a time when the Roman Catholic clergy taught political doctrine more slavish than that which has been, and is, taught by the clergy of the present day; we should have been convinced, that, if the Romish church had been re-exalted, its priests would, in general, have exceeded our priests in political sycophancy and election jobbing; we should have been assured, that an instance, *of which I myself was a witness*, of a Doctor of Divinity offering for sale *two seats in parliament*, if not previously disposed of, *as the price of some dignity in the church*, is only a specimen of what we should have seen in gross under the re-exaltation of the Romish church; we should have been reminded of a time, when, under a Romish hierarchy, a state of parliamentary representation would have been justly described in something worse than the "Hog or Horse" article of the Courier; we should have been brought back to Romish times, and shewn, that then men like Mr. Sheridan were members of parliament; something should have been said, some effort should have been made, to prove to us, either from experience or from reason, that, under a Romish hierarchy, Englishmen would have experienced something more than the income tax, than the seven-years suspension of the habeas corpus act, than the introduction of foreign troops, something more than what, for these twenty-three years past, they have experienced; it should, if possible, have been shewn, that, at some time or other, when England was under a Roman Catholic church, England was in greater peril from without, or in greater misery within, than she is at this moment. All this, Sir, or some of it, at least, should have been shewn, previous to the raising of an outcry against Lord Howick's bill, as a source of danger to the church; because, to put reasonable men on your side, it was necessary to convince them, that the thing, said to be in danger, was a thing the protecting and preserving of which was of some importance to the good of the nation.

Taking it for granted, however, that the church establishment, even as it now stands, with all its pluralities and absentees, is a thing worth contending for, I cannot see how that establishment could possibly have been affected by Lord Howick's bill, if that bill had passed into a law. It is now matter of general notoriety, and it is matter of fact not to be denied, 1st, that in 1793, the power of granting commissions to catholics, in the Irish army, was, by law, given to the king, and that this law was passed with the approbation of Mr. Pitt, and of almost the whole of those who are now in the ministry with you; 2d, that, in 1801, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas went out of office, being followed by Mr. Canning, Mr. Rose, and others now in the ministry with you, because the king would not consent to the bringing

in of a bill, intended to give the Roman Catholics even seats in parliament, upon the bench, and in the privy council; 3d, that in 1804, a law, brought in by Mr. Pitt, was passed, authorizing the king to raise regiments of Roman Catholic *foreigners*, to grant commissions to *foreign* Roman Catholic officers, to dispense with all oaths from them, except a simple oath of fidelity, and to quarter and station these regiments in the heart of our country; 4th, that *all this the king had done without any act of parliament to sanction it*, and that the act of 1804, was, in part, an act to indemnify those who had advised him so to do; 5th, that, at the time when this bill passed, every person now in the ministry was in power, and that you, as attorney general, must have examined, if not actually have drawn up, that bill. Greatly puzzled, therefore, must the world be to discover any thing in the bill of Lord Howick more dangerous to the church than what was contained in the bill actually passed with your and your present colleagues' approbation. Am I told, that, to admit Roman catholic *foreigners* was not dangerous, because they could have no connection, or community of interests, with the Roman Catholics, whether priests or laity, in this country? My answer is, that this distinction is done away by the act of 1793, which authorised the king to grant commissions to Roman Catholics serving in the *Irish* army; so that, if the acts of you and your colleagues were not hostile to the established church, it is impossible that the bill of Lord Howick could have been so.

But, waiving all argument drawn from the example of Pitt and of yourself, what did Lord Howick's bill propose to do? To render it *lawful* for the king to grant, *if he pleased*, commissions to English and Irish catholics, through the whole of the several ranks of the army and the navy, and to insure, by law, the free exercise of his worship, to every Roman catholic soldier or sailor. It is, Sir, beyond my powers of penetration to discover any danger, even the most remote, that could, from such a law, have arisen to the church of England; and, especially when I take into view the well-known facts, that the king, without any such law, has long granted commissions to his Roman catholic subjects, and that the Roman catholic soldiers and sailors are, and long have been, freed from all restraint as to the exercise of their worship. Besides, suppose the bounds to have been extended by this law, *it rested wholly with the king* to appoint or not appoint, to promote or not promote, to cashier or not cashier, any, and every, Roman catholic, either in the army or the navy; so that, if there was any danger at all in the extension, it must have consisted solely in the possibility of the king's not being guided by wisdom in the choice and promotion of his officers. But, even in this case, where shall we look for the source of danger to the *church*? In what way could this bill, a bill intended merely to extend the operation of the king's pleasure, as to promotions in the army and navy, or rather, to render the operation of that pleasure legal; in what way could such a law endanger the safety of the church establishment? It gave nothing to the Roman catholic priests or bishops, either in authority, in name, or in money. It took nothing, either of power or emolument, from the church of England. It left both churches just as they were before; and, if the church of England has experienced any danger from it, or does experience any danger from it, it is that danger which a false and hypocritical clamour seldom fails, first or last, to bring down upon the heads of its inventors and promoters.

"What, then," some one will say, "induced so many of the clergy of the church "of England to send *addresses* against Lord "Howick's bill?" That, Sir, which induces the crowds, that beset Whitehall, to address letters to the minister of the day: a desire to obtain money for doing nothing. If the motive had been other than this; if any thing but the goal of preferment had been in view, the clergy would not have been so tardy in their opposition to the bill. If they had been animated by an anxiety for the preservation of the church, and had regarded the bill as dangerous to it, how came they not to petition the parliament the moment the bill was brought in? They never thought of any such thing. They let the bill go quietly on; nor was it until the bill had been *withdrawn*, that they began to issue their godly fulminations against it. Nay, Sir, even this was not enough to overcome their propensity to be cautious; for they saw the ministry safely turned out, and even after that *they waited to see you with a majority on your side*, before they ventured to address their gracious and pious sovereign for his care in preventing the overthrow of the church. It would be curious enough to see the list of those, who took the lead in these addresses; but, there needs no such list to make their motives evident to the world.

Hypocrisy, detestable in any man, is peculiarly so when met with under the garb of a minister of religion; and, therefore,

the cry of "NO POPERY," set up, or propagated, by too many of the clergy, must, first or last, receive its just reward, in the natural consequences of general detestation. This is not the first set of priests, who have kindled a flame in the multitude; and, as the usual consequence has, heretofore, been the destruction of the kindlers, let them beware. It is, upon this occasion especially, well worthy of remark, that there has been no savage, no mischief-doing mobs, in this country, for many years, except those who have been led by a cry of "*church*" or "*king*," or both together. Amongst all the hundreds of thousands of persons, who have, at different times, and at some times under circumstances extremely irritating, assembled round Sir Francis Burdett, not one man, or woman, has ever committed an act of violence. Upon several occasions what mischief has been anticipated! What preparations have been made for resistance! And what disappointment has been felt at perceiving that all these preparations were unnecessary! "Church and king" mobs have assaulted and killed many people; have rescued prisoners from jail; have burnt and otherwise destroyed houses and goods; and many acts of violence, including one breaking open of a jail, have been committed by "*loyal* volunteers." But, amongst all the assemblages of the people, the cause of which has been their attachment, real or expressed, to the cause of freedom, not a single act of violence, that I remember, has ever been committed. Is it, Sir, that the latter are less brutish than the former; or is it, that the former think themselves sure of impunity? Nevertheless, John Bowles and his clamorous comrades cease not to cry Jacobin and Leveller against every man who is too wise and too just to join them in the cry of "*No Popery!*" Every man, who wishes to see the burdens of the people lightened; every man who wishes to see the public money fairly and fully accounted for; every man who wishes to enjoy, whether in body or estate, the same degree of freedom that his father enjoyed; every man who wishes the church to be supported by the piety and diligence of its pastors, and who, therefore, expresses his dissatisfaction at seeing one half of the churches left to the care of those who receive not the revenues arising from them; every such man is sure to be marked out, by the "loyal" crew, as a Jacobin and Leveller; as an enemy to the church and the king.

It is, however, pleasing to perceive, that this outcry has, on the present occasion, produced little effect, and, upon the whole, no effect at all in favour of those, by whom it was set up. Here and there a set of brutish, or hired, ruffians have made the streets resound with the hypocritical cry; but, in most other places, as in Westminster, it has been regarded as the cry of the crocodile; and, though the selfish *Whigs* have been humbled in the dust, their not-less selfish adversaries have made little progress, except in the hatred of the nation. Praised without ceasing be the king for dissolving the parliament; for this his "recurrence to the sense of the "people;" than which nothing could possibly be more advantageous to the country, unless, indeed, it were another dissolution, another "recurrence to the *sense of the* "*people*," in two or three months' time. What light, through the yawning cracks made by this sudden and delightful shake, has broken in upon those who were before in comparative darkness! The idiot now begins to perceive, and those who were half fools, as to questions of politics, are now men of understanding. All the slang of party, all the trickery of debate, all that amused, lulled, deluded, or defrauded, is now laid bare, is now exposed to the criticism of returning good sense, and excites, by turns, hatred and contempt.

That these feelings, thus directed, may live and gather strength in the minds of Englishmen, and that the consequence may be the restoration of the honour and happiness of England, is the constant prayer of,

Sir,

Your &c. &c.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, 4th June, 1807.

PUBLIC MEN.

Being CIVIS's *2d Letter.*

SIR,——When history, the faithful interpreter between distant ages and nations, shall have recorded the transactions of the last three months, posterity will learn with astonishment and regret, that an age of science and philosophy, of cultivated reason and rational religion, has been disfigured and disgraced, by the existence and avowal of prejudices and bigotry, so rank, that they would be a reproach even to the darkest periods of superstition and barbarism. In the progress of the human mind, individuals of extraordinary genius have sometimes outstripped the tardy advances of general reason, and anticipated the result of centuries of gradual improvement; but this is the first instance, in which, amidst the general progress of cultivation, individuals of enlightened minds have started back from the actual

state of the public intellect, to retrace the steps of reason, and revive the errors of less cultivated times The melancholy, though perhaps inevitable, ignorance of the great mass of the inhabitants of every nation, has at all times rendered them most prone to error, and least capable of resisting the artifices of men interested in imposing upon them. It will, however, be recorded, to the everlasting honour of the people of this country, that, whilst statesmen and legislators have adopted the language of prejudice and bigotry, and sought to rekindle the flames of religious animosities and intolerance, the steady and enlightened reason of the British public has shrunk from the illiberal contagion; and, except in a very few instances, triumphantly resisted the attempted delusion. This remarkable instance of public liberality and popular moderation will be contemplated by future generations, as a most auspicious epoch in the progress of public opinion and national reason. Too long has the legislature of this country, been slowly following the progress of reason, humanity and justice, and suffered itself to be led by the course of events, which it was its proper province either to anticipate or to controul. It is a deplorable condition of a state, when any considerable portion of its subjects is justified by experience, in forming the unhappy association between the alleviation of their grievances and the distress of the whole state. Yet, it is no less true than lamentable, that every relaxation of the penal statutes, against the Catholics of Ireland, was opposed with the same arguments, and on the same grounds, as the late bill, though the urgency of the crisis successively stifled the voice of conscience, and precluded all reasoning against the question. Folly, or a too fatal security may, perhaps, consider the present circumstances of the country less urgent; but, it does not require much political sagacity to perceive, that, whatever may be the termination of the war on the Continent, such an order of things has arisen in Europe, as will require the immediate and complete union and consolidation of all the energies of this empire, in order to enable it to cope, or keep pace, with the strength and establishments of the other nations of Europe. Though the French army were annihilated, the French nation revolutionised, aggrandised, and, what is still more formidable, familiarised with the military conscription, it would not descend from its commanding rank in the scale of nations. But, if the fortune of war should prove favourable to the arms of the French chief, if victory should again attend his career, the difficulties of this country would be so greatly multiplied and enhanced that it might be reasonably questioned, whether concessions would not then come too late, and the project of effecting a consolidation of the whole physical force of the empire prove unavailing. It is a melancholy defect in the administration of our public affairs, that the factions of public men, who are successively entrusted with the government, uniformly profess principles of patriotism, but ever act as partisans. They temporise with their opponents to keep them out, and they temporise with their own professed principles to keep themselves in. They become invariably ministers of expedients, and govern according to events, which, upon every principle of sound policy, they ought to guide. The man, who neglects to provide against the hour of peril and distress, abandons his prospective security for his present enjoyment. An administration that does not adopt every obviously wise precaution to secure the future prosperity of the nation, may govern with less danger to its own continuance in office, but sacrifices the permanent interest of the state to that most selfish and unworthy object. Ministers should divest themselves, on entering upon office, of all selfish, party, or partial feelings. The executive power of a great empire never appears to more advantage, than when imitating the universal and indiscriminating bounty of Providence to all its creatures. It is not matter of reproach against a public man, that he is attached to his religion; but it is a subject of just complaint, that he should make the rule of his faith the standard of his public administration. The man who studies creeds and polemical theology, not maxims of wise government and the science of legislation, may make a good recluse, but must be a bad politician. Very different talents and qualifications are necessary for the government of a fraternity of monks, and the administration of the affairs of a great nation. The system that would be wise for a body of men, associated upon principles subversive of every natural and social duty, would be ill suited to the government of a great nation, where it is so much the interest of the state to strengthen the one and enhance the other. Indeed, in a political point of view, it would be much more desireable, that a minister of a great empire should have too little, than too much, of a religious bias. The father, who feels alike towards all his children, shares his paternal solicitude impartially amongst them, and provides equally for them all; but he that suffers himself to be influenced by a

predilection for one, is guilty of perpetual injustice to all the rest; and, too often sacrifices the interests of the whole family to the capricious gratifications of his favourite. Considerations of religion never interfere with our system of relations with foreign powers; as, otherwise, we should not have been at the same time, the allies of Protestants, Pagans, Greeks, Papists, Turks, and even of the Pope himself. Intimate alliances with foreign states, no less than the internal and perfect union of all descriptions of its subjects, constitute the strength and security of a great empire; and, when the object is the same, it may well seem extraordinary, that the means should be so different, for the external and internal accomplishment of it. I am aware, that to this it may be answered, in the idle cant of the day, that the preservation of our church establishment depends upon the continuance of that internal policy, which excludes papists and dissenters from the possession of political power. But, if the undisturbed and undisputed possession for a century and a half, and the certain and decided protection of the legislature, were not a sufficient security for our national establishments, they would find a most effectual shield in the insensible but accumulated improvement of the human mind. The materials of which the intolerance and fanaticism of former times were made up, no longer exist: and it would be to belie the evidence of science, philosophy, and reason, to deny the civil, moral, and religious amelioration of the nation; to reverse the order of intellectual progress, and reascend the current of time and experience, for a moment to suppose a British public of the present day, capable of renewing the scenes of phrenzy, folly, and enormity, which darken so many of the pages of our past history. It is the invariable character of imbecility to neglect measures of precaution or defence, till overtaken by danger, and to augment its efforts in proportion as it recedes from the peril that rendered them necessary. If we regard the subject with the eyes of reason, not through the medium of bigotry, it will be incontestibly obvious, that the policy of penal statutes on the subject of religion, had survived the necessity of forming them, and that the penalties have outlived even the semblance of policy, for continuing them. The fluctuating state of the national religion pending the reformation, and the unsteady maxims of government both in church and state, for some time after, produced those convulsions and revolutions, that rendered the enactment of the penal statutes indispensible. The zeal of the sectarists, that sprung up from the ruins of the old religion, was goaded on by mutual opposition to fury and fanaticism. But the acrimony of the contending parties has long since subsided, and the bitterness of their contests, and the religious animosity, with which they prosecuted them, are now lost in the mild spirit of the gospel, and the devout exercise of all the social and religious charities. The confluence of many streams is inevitably the scene of great agitation, but as their respective waters advance from the point of concussion, they insensibly subside into the same smooth and unruffled surface. The code of penal laws was something more than a century, from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George I. in progress; it has now been near a century on the decline; and, as a new æra has arisen in the political system of Europe, let us hope, that we may date from its commencement the total abolition of all religious distinctions, so far as regards the indiscriminate employment of all classes of subjects in the service and defence of the state. When the last penal laws were enacted, there was a popish pretender to the throne, whose claims and avowed designs rendered the establishment of such distinctions indispensible to the quiet, if not to the safety of the state. That danger is now long past, but there exists another and more formidable danger, in the person of an implacable enemy, whose gigantic pretensions are to be defeated, not by the distinctions, but by the complete union of all classes of the subjects of this realm. When the vessel is in danger, every body on board should share in the peril and glory of preserving her. It is idle, it is wanton, it is wicked, to reject or relax those efforts that can be given, and are necessary, to the great purpose of present preservation. How bitter would be the pangs of reflection, how severe the stings of remorse, in the moment of common ruin, to those who should look back upon their own headstrong folly, and too—too late become sensible, that the catastrophe might have been prevented, if they had not stifled the voice of reason by the clamours of prejudice, and spurned at security, that was to be purchased by the practice of justice and humanity towards their fellow subjects and sufferers? But the church would thereby be endangered! Whence, and from whom is the danger to arise? What danger has arisen from the relaxations that have already taken place? Is it not a gross perversion of reason and common sense, to suppose, that any body of rational beings will be more discontented with less cause, or less loyal and attached to the existing constitution

in all its branches, the more interest they have in maintaining it? The absurdity of such an opinion is too gross to bear the slightest consideration. The champions of the church militant may quiet their fears: the clergy, or the established religion has nothing seriously to apprehend from even the total repeal of all the test laws; laws practically obsolete, with respect to the great civil and military departments of the state, and which are efficient only in limiting the elective franchises and municipal rights of venal corporations and boroughs. The general reason of the question, therefore, is in favour of the policy of removing all those distinctions that have so long survived the occasions which called for them. It is time to abolish them, when the most strenuous advocates for their continuance can urge nothing in their defence but unqualified invective, misrepresentation, and falsehood. Opinions are imputed to the Catholics, which they deny upon their oath, and they are represented as holding odious tenets, with respect to persons differing from them in religion, and the power of the Pope, which, upon the authority of the most learned of their Universities, they have publicly and solemnly disclaimed as any part of their religion or belief. After such satisfactory attestations of their freedom from the detestable doctrines, falsely, but incessantly urged against them, it is really extraordinary to hear persons, who make oaths the test of truth and sincerity, still charging them upon these heads. By refusing to take the tests, which they cannot do with a safe conscience, they shew their reverence for the sanctity of an oath, and intitle themselves to credit on the oaths they have taken. But the clamour and opposition which was raised against the late bill, and the fanatic cry of "the Church," and "no Popery," were, if possible, more monstrous and extravagant, than the ridiculous absurdities urged against the general question of Emancipation. That bill was to give to the Catholics nothing which they had not possessed before; but it would have given to the state, what it cannot have without such a measure, an inexhaustible supply of *native* troops for the regular army. If it gave to the King the power of advancing Catholic officers to the highest ranks of the army and navy, it was a power, that in the exercise of it, was to be subject to his royal discretion, and to condemn that part of the measure, because the power might be improperly exercised, was to insinuate a direct accusation against his Majesty, that he was not fit to be trusted with such a power. The bill was also to restore the consistency of the laws of the empire, and to vindicate the character of parliament. It is wholly unworthy of an enlightened legislature to suffer that by connivance, which should never be done but by the authority of law, and there is little magnanimity in the subterfuge, that would take advantage of the clandestine service for the purpose of withholding the public reward, and honourable distinction of professional eminence. Every body knows that there are numberless Roman Catholics in the army and navy, and every person acquainted with the subject must be convinced, that there are no better officers nor soldiers in the service. They have fought, they have bled, they have conquered in the cause of their country; and yet, these are the men, to whom it has been said in parliament, that "the sword" was not to be intrusted. I must confess I do not like these canting politicians, who speak unmeaning jargon for the sake of a sounding and pretty phrase, who embarrass government, till they get into power, and take the first opportunity after to desert the cause they had before advocated. Neither do I admire the sanctimonious sect of public men, who, in the ostentation of universal philanthropy, consult the civilisation and happiness of mankind in every region of the globe; but who, in the true and bigotted spirit of narrow minded sectarists, object to a grant of five thousand pounds for the augmentation of the Catholic seminary in Ireland. I shall not say any thing now of the measure for confiding that sword to foreign Catholics, which, it seems, ought not, and is not to be intrusted to native Catholics, because it is a disgrace to the author, and a recorded libel upon the loyalty of our Catholic fellow subjects. It appears, however, to be only a part of the great evil, of which the nation has to complain. Our public men seem either afraid, unable, or ashamed to look boldly into the circumstances of the internal condition of the empire, though, in the activity of their benevolence or politics, they seek for objects of compassion or recruits for our armies, in distant regions, whilst better might be found in great plenty much nearer home. Yet, I will venture to predict, that things will never go well till much more attention shall be paid to the domestic and local interests of the empire; and, if ever that period, which, I trust, is not far distant, shall arrive, that in the defection of foreign mercenaries, and the failure of visionary schemes of distant civilisation, the security and happiness of this empire shall be immoveably supported by its own industrious, enlightened and free population.—— C, 1s. —— *May 25, 1807.*

POOR LAWS.—MR. MALTHUS.

Being C. S.'*s Third Letter.*

SIR,—Whatever may be the degree of discredit which Mr. Malthus may have incurred by the broaching of doctrines, which, if brought into practice, because they may be true in theory, would make it morally unjust, and politically wrong, to check the vices and imperfections to which man and his institutions are naturally liable--nay, which would render social order and religion themselves, as the means of human happiness, crimes of the first magnitude; still every merit must be allowed him for having placed the subject of political economy upon the only principle on which it can be discussed with advantage, namely, that of *labour as applied to the cultivation of the earth.* Fatally, it is but too generally the opinion, that if we will but follow up our different callings with industry and economy, then we have performed our duty, and every thing is done for our welfare that labour and prudence can do. A moment's reflection, however, must satisfy even the shallow-thinking advocates of this sophistical doctrine, that if the labour which should cultivate the ground be otherwise directed, no other description of toil, or exertion of prudence, can supply our wants, or avert the famine, misery, and vice which Mr. M. prognosticates from a deficiency of soil. Mercantile industry, for instance, has crept into the highest esteem with the well-dressed, as well as with the ill-dressed rabble; and as merchants have slily seized upon the wealth of the modern world, boldly usurped its governments, and spread the flames of war from pole to pole, there is nothing which it is thought beyond their reach to do. But, stop, rabbles, even you rabbles of state; what is the industry of merchants, by comparison with that of the agriculturist? Just what the industry of those beasts of burden called mules and asses is to the labour of those who load and feed them, and neither more nor less. Mules and asses, however, are useful animals in their places: like merchants, they fetch and carry the loads which the husbandman and manufacturer prepare for and lay upon their backs; but more of them are not therefore to be bred and fed, than can be maintained without starving and distressing those who feed them. And the principle applies not only to merchants, but to all those who are not employed in the more innocent and permanently lucrative pursuits of agricultural industry;—but it applies particularly to idlers of all descriptions; because, characteristically speaking, they are more daring thieves, and more unrelenting robbers, than those are whose labour is misapplied. Considering idlers, therefore, as the greatest bane of social happiness; and as it is my duty, as one who complains of their number, to detail, in some measure the means of reducing it with advantage to the state, I will, in substance, quote that part of my letter in the Register of May 30th, 1807, which states the leading evils of which idlers are the natural offspring. These evils are, 1st, the Monopoly of Land; 2d, the Freedom of Trade, including the right of every man to do as he pleases with his own property; 3d, Taxes and Tithes: and, 4th, the National Debt. If it be true, as stated by Mr. M. that the establishment of the Utopian system of happiness and virtue would be the means of aggravating the misery and vice which it was intended to eradicate, so it shall appear that these grand schemes of the *infallible* wisdom of our forefathers, but particularly the last of them, have terminated in a similar effect upon our comforts and virtue. I. Out of the Monopoly of Land, as many idlers arise as there are large proprietors, large occupiers, and individuals employed in furnishing them with the luxury in which they wallow; such as servants in and out of livery, men-miliners, and the long train of trades-people to whom their luxury and ease give employment; who, though they labour as hard as those who cultivate the soil may do, yet give no aid in the cultivation of it, and therefore furnish no part of their own supply of its produce. II. Out of the Freedom of Trade and the right alluded to, as many idlers arise as gain their subsistence by the means of merchandising, banking, speculation, monopoly, forestalling, and regrating; and as are employed by them in the ways above stated. III. Out of Taxes and Tythes as many idlers arise as form our fat list of doctors; our lean list of curates; our long list of placemen and pensioners; our intolerable swarms of taxgatherers, excise, and custom house officers; our immense naval and military establishments; and the immenser number still to whom these lists, swarms, and establishments give every other but agricultural employment. And, IV., the National Debt. As this is a scheme for creating and supporting idlers, which originated in the sacrilegious-to-doubt wisdom of our fore fathers of the Whig tribe, and which, coupled with the other offsprings of their patriotism, namely, the freedom of trade, and the right of every man to do as he pleases with his own property, it would be worse than sacrilege to deny as a proof that they are exclu-

sively the men of the people, that R. B. Sheridan and Peter Moore, as Whigs, are the only men that ought to represent Westminster and Coventry; it is a scheme, the rise and progress, the bearings and operations of which it is not less necessary to know, than it is to be acquainted with its consequent increase of idlers. It rises out of the freedom of trade, and the right of every man to do as he pleases with his own property. Let it be remembered, however, though I do not disapprove of the principle, that the Whigs, any more than the Tories, will not allow this right to extend to any part of our property but that which is not absorbed in tithes, taxes, and poors rates; and which point, I have shewn, does not amount to 1-10th of the whole. But, nevertheless, in consequence of this freedom, every man secures to himself what he can of land and of every thing else; and no matter how, or what will be the result to others, if so be that the *cobweb laws*, by which the Whigs modify the freedom, are not violated. Then, in virtue of this right, they charge what price they please to the occupier and consumer; and as they are pleased to charge a greater price, or to hold more property than they want for their own immediate use or can otherwise employ with equal advantage, so it pleases them to lend the surplus to the ministers for the time being; who, in gratitude for the ease and facility with which the loan enable them to promote the welfare of the nation, by persecuting its enemies and pensioning their own friends, take, in their turn, from the occupier and consumer interest for the very surplus which was thus *freely* and *rightly* extorted from them by the loanmongers. The occupiers however, and that part of the consumers who are dealers in the produce of labour, have on the first view of the case no reason to complain of the extortions either of the loanmongers or of ministers: for, if they are skinned by these parties, they have a right to skin others, because they are free to add the amount of the surplus extorted by the one and the interest by the other to the price of the articles in which they deal, and so skin others and each other. The right of complaining, then, it would appear devolves upon those classes only of the consumers who are limited annuitants, and dealers only in their own labour. Such annuitants cannot increase their incomes, as prices are thus advanced, consequently as prices advance, their allowance becomes short; and if the *idle* magistrates were disposed to permit the labourers to demand wages which would secure the necessary comforts, whatever might be the price of the articles that compose them, their poverty is too pressing to enable them to stand out, till their employers fall in with their terms. Necessarily, therefore, the labourers first, and next the annuitants, are crushed into paupers; and up starts the poors rate; in the exact proportion in which the combined operations of the Monopoly of Land, the Freedom of Trade, the Tithes and Taxes, and the National Debt, create idlers, enhance prices, and stock the workhouses with paupers, with wretches amounting to more than one-eighth of the population!!! Will the Whigs deny these facts, or, that "Hampden in the field and Sidney "upon the scaffold" had any hand in them? Or, will Mr. Malthus, and those who would wish to have his theories brought into practice, justify them as necessary to ward off more malignant causes of wretchedness and vice? Let us, Sir, keep their attention to those facts, and their noses to these interrogations until the question is fairly decided who are the Jacobins and Levellers. But, with respect to the National Debt, it creates not only as many idlers as subsist upon its annual interest, and the annual loans which form its capital, but, also, as many as are employed in stock-jobbing and stock-broking, that is, in substance, in buying and selling as many of their fellow subjects and fellow creatures, as are allotted by ministers to slave into being that portion of the luxuries and necessaries of life which their employers, themselves, and the idle dependants of both, waste and consume. From the return made to parliament, under Mr. Abbott's act, of the numbers employed in trade, agriculture, and mechanism, I have calculated, that, including infants, ageds, and infirms, the action, and reaction of these Whig establishments, principally, have created idlers to the incredible amount of 7,163,082 out of the 9,343,578 persons that form the population of England and Wales; leaving only 2,180,496 to perform the labour and supply the wants of the nation. And, when we consider, that all the tradesmen and mechanics to whom luxury gives employment are included in that number, and even if it were not that their labours must be unjustifiably excessive, we must either admit that the productions of agriculture and manufacture, are scarce to the amount of the deficiency of them, which is felt by the lower and middling classes of the people, or, that their produce to the amount of that deficiency is literally wasted. There are instances of waste in many cases, and at different seasons, particularly in those of animal food and malt

liquor in hot weather; but as such instances, cannot, I think, be supposed to affect, perceivably, the consumption of so large a portion of the community; and as the number of consumers appears to be too great by comparison with that of the producers, I hold no doubt but that it is on the right side of the question, we err in setting it down as a matter of fact, that the deficiency is real. And therefore, 1st. as there are above 51,000,000 acres of land in cultivation, in Great Britain, which, if not wasted, to a great extent, in parks and pleasure grounds, and in yielding food for mere animals of pleasure, might, perhaps, be made to maintain as many inhabitants; 2d, as there are above 73,000,000 of acres more uncultivated, which, if properly managed, might, possibly, be made to maintain as many more; and, 3d, as the number of our idlers is unjustifiably great, on the ground of any other right, than the right to plunder and enslave the nation, I do not only declare it as my unalterable persuasion, that none but *men of the Moon* would look to the time when the surface of the earth will be insufficient to maintain its inhabitants, but, also, that no other earthly scheme can remove the deficiency of which we are compelled by reason and instinct to complain, but that which will convert the necessary number of idlers into useful labourers and furnish the land and materials required to employ them: for, until the cause is removed, it is naturally impossible that the effect can cease. And I shall consider the monopoly of land, the freedom of trade, the tythes and taxes, and the national debt as the leading cause to be removed, until some one of the contrary opinion, prove, by clear and incontrovertible arguments, that they do not operate in the manner I have stated, and convert useful labourers into useless idlers and wretched paupers. To convert idlers, however, into useful labourers and to furnish them with the subjects required to labour upon is one thing, but to secure a sufficiency of the produce of their own labour to support their healths, and prolong their lives, for I claim no more for them, is another thing. The principle, therefore, which I propose to secure this sufficiency, and to preserve that ascending gradation of wealth on which alone, perhaps, the real interest of all depends, is not a new fangled principle, but that which was in full practice when pauperism formed no part of the public grievances; namely, that of making all payments in kind, or if more convenient, as I think it would, in money, regulated by the price of corn, at or for a given time prior to the time of payment. Corn being the first article of necessity, is therefore the most perfect and unchangeable standard of value. But, as labour is generally paid by the week, its wages can be regulated by no better criterion than the weekly price of bread: first ascertaining the number of quartern loaves to which the labourer is entitled, to secure that relaxation from labour and portion of comforts which, on the principle of fellow feeling, or, the great moral rule of doing as we would be done by, may be thought necessary to the preservation of his health, and the prolongation of his life. These, Sir, are the principles of the plan which I have to propose for the relief of the poor, and the well being of the state as it rests upon their exertions and loyalty, in lieu of Mr. Whitbread's funding and literary schemes, and of Mr. Bone's scheme of "withholding labour from "market, as merchants do their goods, and "farmers their stock, until the labourer is satisfied with its price." And if they have the same views with me of the *causes* of the evils, which I have no doubt they are sincere in their endeavours to remove, I indulge the hope that their future plans will demonstrate that they are themselves sensible, that their present schemes are no more applicable than a salve would be where the caustic is required. As to Mr. Whitbread's schemes, they are only hurtful as they delay the application of the remedy that belongs to the case; but as to that of Mr. Bone, there is nothing horrid in a combination of labourers to raise wages, or in the progressive depreciation of money, as it would attend a progressive advance of nominal wages, which does not, to me, appear contained in it. Mine, however, strikes at the root of these evils. Men are less prone to combine, when their rights are defined and secured with the clearness and justice which I have attempted; and as to the depreciation of money, arising as it evidently does from the right, inclination, and power of one party to withhold their goods from market till the price comes up to their liking, and of another to issue money to meet the demand, whatever it may be, it is an evil that will be greatly if not completely removed, when all the payments to be made by the party demanding a high price, are regulated by the price they receive, as I propose. Then they shall have no interest in a high price, but the contrary; naturally, therefore, they shall have no desire for it, but the contrary. And as this desire ceases on their part, a multitude of bankers, rag-money coiners, and accountants, would, as natu-

rally, leave their strong holds and betake themselves to the field. Yet they cannot complain that their right to do as they please with their rag property is infringed; because they may stay in their banks and eat it, if they do not like to come out and earn what they eat. But there is another negative mode of putting some stop to the depreciation of money, namely that of leaving no right of action at law, with those who give credit, against those to whom they give credit. This is not taking from them the right of doing as they please with their own property for they may still give credit if they will, but it would make them more cautious in taking promises for cash, in giving currency to the bank-notes, bills of exchange and promissary notes of *idle* idiots or active swindlers. Sir, having thus, upon the principle that "whatever may be the state of the dexterity, "skill, and judgement with which labour "is applied in any nation, the abundance "or scantiness of its annual supply must "depend, during the continuance of that "state, upon the proportion between the "number of those who are annually em-"ployed in useful labour, and that of those "who are not so employed," endeavoured to shew at once the bane and antidote of our system of political economy, I hope it will appear that, a leveller as I may be called, I have no desire to carry the principle farther—no intention of meddling with the freedom of trade and the right of every man to do as he pleases with his own property, farther than just to leave a right with no man, or body of men, to do, or leave undone, any thing that has the effect of half starving one part of the community and imprisoning another. C. S.—*Cellar, 29th May* 1807.

CATHOLIC BILL.

Sir,——I feel myself under no slight obligation to your correspondent Anti-Catholicus for the opportunity which he has afforded me of again defending from misrepresentation the peculiar tenets of the Catholic church, and vindicating the purity of principle and integrity of conduct of its disciples. I agree with him, that "the Ca-"tholic Question is of all others the most "important for an Englishman's considera-"tion; and, therefore, the more necessary "to be well understood;" and if, as I am willing to persuade myself, we have reason and justice on our side, every discussion of the subject, by enabling us to form a correct judgment as to its nature and tendency, must serve to dispel error, to confirm and elucidate truth, and to enforce conviction. It will be proper, therefore, in the first instance, in order thoroughly to comprehend this important question, to state unreservedly what are the claims of the Catholics; and next to consider the objections which are adduced, in order to justify the refusal to acknowledge and admit them. The Catholic Claim has been differently denominated according to the different views in which the question has presented itself. It was first debated under the head of Catholic Toleration; latterly, the term Emancipation has been more generally adopted; but, as neither of these expressions exactly corresponds with my idea of the subject, I have chosen to denominate it a Liberal Toleration of the Catholics. This diversity of expression is asserted by Anti-Catholicus to imply "an "artful disguise to mislead the Protestants, "as it does not convey the smallest idea of "what the Catholics really aim at." It however, appears to me, that, taking the words in their general acceptation, we mean by Toleration, the undisturbed profession and exercise of our religion; by Emancipation, a freedom from the galling penalties and disqualifications which such profession entails; and by Liberal Toleration, so to blend together and modify the sense of both the preceding expressions, as to denote the liberty of exercising our religion without its being pleaded against us to our exclusion from any of our birthright privileges. But to make the matter more intelligible, and to place it in a still clearer and more distinct point of view, the Catholics acknowledge, that their claim comprises a full and free admission, in the same manner as is granted to men of the established church of England, to the participation of all the rights, as they acknowledge themselves bound to observe all the duties of British subjects. Consequently, we think it but just, that Catholic noblemen should resume in the House of Peers the seats of their ancestors; that Catholic commoners of every class should have free admission into all posts and places of trust, dignity, honour and emolument, on the same terms as men of the predominant and favoured sect. "But," says Anti-Catholicus, "let me ask the men who wish to "make Catholics legislators, Catholics the "king's advisers, Catholics commanders of "our army and navy, upon what principle "the Catholics should be excluded from "the throne?" The question is insidious; but, though I perceive its drift, I shall answer it undisguisedly. Liberty of conscience is the privilege of the monarch no less than of the lowest of his subjects. James the Second was not presumed to abdicate the

throne, merely because he professed himself to be a Catholic. He infringed upon the constitutional liberties of his subjects, and therefore, his sceptre was wrested from him by a power to which even kings must submit. An ignorant and bigotted people require from their temporal sovereign, whatever may be his private opinion, a conformity to the rites and ceremonies of their established predominant religion; as Catherine the Empress of Russia, though a Protestant by education, and an unbeliever in revealed religion by principle, submitted throughout her reign to the doctrines, and outwardly complied with the discipline, of the Russian church, so as never even to be suspected of non-conformity: whereas the Electoral House of Saxony, on the election of Augustus to the crown of Poland, embraced the Catholic religion without alienating by this measure the affections of the Saxons, their hereditary subjects, who were universally Protestants. I refer Anti-Catholicus to these examples for a reply to his question. In a state of society such as that of Russia, I admit the necessity of the sovereign's appearing attached to the forms of the national church; but an enlightened nation does not less feel and acknowledge the blessings of virtuous administration, because the sovereign differs from his subjects on questions unconnected with the temporal government of the state. Hence, then, Anti-Catholicus may learn the very extent of our claims: they are comprised in one short sentence, UNIVERSAL LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE. Nor let it be objected, that, when the Romish power was at its zenith, the Catholic church refused to grant what we now claim; and, on the contrary, persecuted even to death the seceders from its established doctrines. The progress of philosophy, which has unfolded to us clearer apprehensions of the true spirit of religion, has shewn the enormity of such conduct. Catholics of the present day sincerely detest the remembrance of it, and renounce and abjure the sophistry which sanctioned it. It is illiberal to reproach us with the errors of the dark ages. Were they peculiar to the Catholics? Did not Calvin condemn Servetus to the stake? And did not the Huguenots of France and the Catholics alternately murder each other as either party obtained advantage?—To judge from the language of our opponents, it would appear that we aim, not at a fair and equal participation of the rights of Englishmen, but rather, at universal dominion. We wish that the king should have the legal prerogative of appointing Catholics, according to their merit and services, to all posts in the army and navy; and this is represented as an ambitious desire of engrossing all the power of the state. Do Protestants then apprehend that Catholics are men of such transcendent abilities, that they would immediately outstrip their rivals in the career of glory? Is their address so courtly, their manner so insinuating, their reasoning so irresistible, that, if they can once obtain access to the royal ear, they, who "like the Turk, can "bear no brother near the throne," will immediately, like the cuckoo, dislodge from the nest all their competitors, and monopolize the royal favour?—Elegibility to the representation of certain portions of the people in parliament, is comprehended in the emancipation we solicit; and it is thence concluded by Anti-Catholicus, that we are then exclusively to legislate for the people of the United Kingdom. It is predicted, that we shall then introduce what Anti-Catholicus emphatically terms "the *attendant excellencies and embellishments* of our religion, that we shall pass laws to authorise "English Catholic bishops to fulminate "bulls *ex cathedra*, that by act of parliament "we shall enact the exercise of auricular "confession in the cabinet of the monarch, "that all the liberal policy of our revered "Queen Mary will be again revived, and "Salisbury Plain or Smithfield Market, be "possibly appropriated for that delicious "repast an *auto da fé*." These, however, are vain fears; for, even on the hypothesis of a fair and equal representation of the people, the Catholics, whether considered with respect to their numbers, their property, or their influence in the state, will return but a small proportion of members: (nay, Anti-Catholicus himself, with some little inconsistency, admits only the possibility of our sending *four* members to parliament) and if the House of Commons continue to be constituted as it is at present, does Anti-Catholicus seriously apprehend that the members of it will cease to be influenced by motives wholly unconnected with the religious persuasion of their constituents? Anti-Catholicus fears, that the emancipation of Catholics will undermine "the valuable fabric of "regular government, social order, and our "holy religion." But, I appeal to common sense and universal experience, whether such fatal consequences need be apprehended, even if Catholicism were to become the predominant religion of the state. Does not, however, Anti-Catholicus reason in absolute contradiction of every principle which actuates human conduct, when he argues, that because Catholics will then have a greater interest in the preservation of so-

cial order, they will therefore labour to introduce confusion? That, because they will more experience the blessings of regular government, they will therefore feel greater disposition to subvert it? With respect to our situation as Catholics, considered in a religious sense, abstractedly from our civil and political situation, emancipation itself will make little or no difference. We enjoy at this time religious toleration almost to its full extent. We are unmolested in the exercise of public or private devotion, our churches are open, and our doctrines are preached without concealment or prevarication. How, then, will the religion of the church of England (which I presume to be the holy religion alluded to by Anti-Catholicus) be exposed to greater danger than it is at present? Will our power of making converts be increased, or will not rather our motives for strengthening our party be diminished? If our religion be really a composition of such farcical doctrines and ceremonies as Anti-Catholicus asserts, can men of the church of England seriously apprehend, in this enlightened and philosophical age, that their national establishment will be eclipsed by the unclouded lustre of the Catholic church? I am compelled, however, to draw this conclusion, and unless the advocates of intolerance can shew some plausible ground for their apprehensions, I can but interpret those very apprehensions as a confession, that their predominance would immediately sink, if it were not buoyed up by the strong arm of temporal power.——I come now to consider Anti-Catholicus himself, and to point out how uncandidly he has animadverted on certain passages of my letter. I have explained the Catholic opinion respecting transubstantiation, auricular confession, and the infallibility of the Pope :—summarily indeed; because I did not wish to abuse your goodness in requiring the insertion of discussions unconnected with, or ill-suited to, the general plan of your work. Anti-Catholicus, in his review of my letter, does not even condescend to notice what I have written on these subjects, but passes over my remarks on Simplicius's letter to tell you, Sir, " that your correspondent " Simplicius has his thanks for a very ex- " cellent and instructive letter, in which he " has unfolded some of the principal tenets " of the Catholic faith;" and he calls upon the same Simplicius " to continue to point " out the fallacies of the Romish religion;" although I have already shewn, that this very Simplicius, instead of unfolding, has misrepresented our tenets; and, although I have exposed *his* fallacy in his attempt to calumniate our church. I trust that the common sense of your readers will justify my pointing out, without requiring from me any reply to, such illiberality. For my own part, I consider Anti-Catholicus's abuse of our tenets, and his appeal to his able coadjutor Simplicius, as a confession of his inability to controvert my arguments.—A. B.—*Hampstead, May* 12, 1807.

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPER.

CAPTURE OF MONTE VIDEO.——*From the London Gazette Extraordinary; dated Downing Street, April* 12, 1807.

A dispatch, of which the following is a copy, was received this morning at the Office of Viscount Castlereagh, one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, from Brigadier General Auchmuty, to the Right Hon. W. Windham:

Monte Video, Feb. 6, 1807.

SIR,——I have the honour to inform you, that his Majesty's troops under my command have taken by assault, and after a most determined resistance, the important fortress and city of Monte Video.——The Ardent, with her convoy, arrived at Maldonado on the 5th of Jan.; and I immediately took under my orders the troops from the Cape, commanded by Lieut. Col. Backhouse. On the 13th I evacuated that place without opposition, leaving a small garrison on the island of Gorriti.—On consulting with Rear Admiral Stirling, it was determined to attack Monte Video; and I landed on the morning of the 18th, to the Westward of the Caretas Rocks, in a small bay, about 9 miles from the town. The enemy were in great force, with guns on the heights, when we disembarked; but they did not advance to oppose us, and suffered me to take a strong position, about a mile from the shore. A trifling cannonade, and some firing at the outposts, commenced in the afternoon and continued occasionally during our stay on that ground. —On the 19th we moved towards Monte Video. The right column, under the Hon. Brigadier General Lumley, was early opposed. About 4000 of the enemy's horse occupied two heights to his front and right. As we advanced, a heavy fire of round and grape opened upon us; but a spirited charge in front, from the light battalion under Lieut. Col. Brownrigg, dispersed the corps opposed to him, with the loss of a gun. The enemy on the flank did not wait a similar movement, but retreated. They continued retiring before us, and permitted us, without any further opposition, except a distant cannonade, to take up a position about 2 miles from the citadel. Our advanced posts oc-

cupied the suburbs, and some small parties were posted close to the works; but in the evening the principal part of the suburbs was evacuated.—The next morning the enemy came out of the town, and attacked us with their whole force, about 6000 men, and a number of guns. They advanced in two columns; the right, consisting of cavalry, to turn our left flank, while the other, of infantry, attacked the left of our line; this column pushed in our advanced posts, and pressed so hard on our out-picquet, of four hundred men, that Col. Browne, who commanded on the left, ordered three companies of the 40th, under Major Campbell, to their support: these companies fell in with the head of the column, and very bravely charged it; the charge was as gallantly received, and great numbers fell on both sides; at length the column began to give way, when it was suddenly and impetuously attacked in flank by the rifle corps, and light battalion, which I had ordered up, and directed to the particular point. The column now gave way on all sides, and was pursued, with great slaughter and the loss of a gun, to the town. The right column, observing the fate of their companions, rapidly retired, without coming into action.——The loss of the enemy was considerable, and has been estimated at 1500 men; their killed might amount to between two and three hundred; we have taken the same number of prisoners, but the principal part of the wounded got back into the town; I am happy to add, that ours was comparatively trifling.—The consequences of this affair were greater than the action itself. Instead of finding ourselves surrounded with horse, and a petty warfare at our posts, many of the inhabitants of the country separated, and retired to their several villages, and we were allowed quietly to set down before the town.—From the best information I could obtain, I was led to believe that the defences of Monte Video were weak, and the garrison by no means disposed to make an obstinate resistance; but I found the works truly respectable, with 160 pieces of cannon; and they were ably defended.—The enemy, being in possession of the island of Rastones, commanded the harbour; and I was aware that their gun boats would annoy us, as we apprehended. A two gun battery was constructed on the 23d to keep them in check, and our posts were extended to the harbour, and completely shut in the garrison on the land side. Their communication was still, however, open by water, and their boats conveyed to them troops and provision: even water for the garrison was obtained by these means; for the wells that supply the town were in our possession.——On the 25th we opened batteries of four 24 pounders and two mortars, and all the frigates and smaller vessels came in, as close as they could with safety, and cannonaded the town. But finding that the garrison was not intimidated into a surrender, I constructed, on the 28th, a battery of six 24 pounders, within a 1000 yards of the south east bastion of the citadel, which I was informed was in so weak a state that it might be easily breached. The parapet was soon in ruins, but the rampart received little injury, and I was soon convinced that my means were unequal to a regular siege; the only prospect of success that presented itself was, to erect a battery as near as possible to a wall by the south gate, that joins the works to the sea, and endeavour to breach it. This was effected by a six gun battery within 600 yards, and though it was exposed to a very superior fire from the enemy, which had been incessant during the whole of the siege, a breach was reported practicable on the 2d instant. Many reasons induced me not to delay the assault, though I was aware the troops would be exposed to a very heavy fire in approaching and mounting the breach. Orders were issued for the attack an hour before day break the ensuing morning, and a summons was sent to the Governor in the evening to surrender the town. To this message no answer was returned.——The troops destined for the assault consisted of the rifle corps under Major Gardner, the light infantry under Lieut. Col. Brownrigg and Major Trotter, the grenadiers under Majors Campbell and Tucker, and the 38th regiment under Lieut. Col. Vassal and Major Nugent.—They were supported by the 40th reg. under Major Dalrymple, and the 87th under Lieut. Col. Butler and Major Miller. The whole were commanded by Col. Browne. The remainder of my force, consisting of the 17th light dragoons, detachments of the 20th and 21st light dragoons, the 47th regt., a company of the 71st, and a corps of 700 marines and seamen, were encamped under Brigadier Gen. Lumley, to protect our rear.——At the appointed hour the troops marched to the assault. They approached near the breach before they were discovered, when a destructive fire from every gun that could bear upon it, and from the musketry of the garrison, opened upon them.

To be continued.

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